

Solidarity with Sisters' Statement on the Completion of the CDF Mandate

April 16, 2015

Today, the Vatican's decision to conclude its mandate for reform of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR) finally puts an end to a situation that invited divisiveness in the Church. Throughout this whole process, LCWR kept its integrity, dignity, and hope. As they continued with their mission, they worked closely and quietly with Archbishop Sartain and the other bishop-delegates to engage in respectful dialogue with them. LCWR's response to the mandate enabled the process to conclude with the beautiful statement, **"We learned that what we hold in common is much greater than any of our differences."**

Underlying this milestone today is the extraordinary, contemplative, communal way of leadership of women religious. The foundation of LCWR's way of life and leadership is rooted in the gospel, steeped in contemplation, and open to the Holy Spirit. In their response to the mandate, they modeled how to live in "a manner worthy of the call we have received, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another through love, striving to preserve the unity of spirit through the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4:1-4). Many grace-filled things happened during this difficult time.

- LCWR kept its strong focus on its true mission, which is to support the leadership of its member congregations to help women religious live in a manner that is authentic to their call and charism.
- LCWR congregations grew increasingly close, in their attentiveness to one another, in their communications, and in their mutual support.
- Many thousands of people stood with LCWR, both in gratitude for sisters' lives and in substantive solidarity on who we are as Church.
- LCWR embraced that substantive unity about important ways of understanding ourselves as Church, as in the new LCWR Call.
- Many more people came to know LCWR better through all the attention.
- The time spent in dialogue "led to clarifying and fruitful conversations" between LCWR and the Bishops.
- LCWR gave the world a successful example of leadership that is steeped in nonviolence and peace.

Although the mandate has ended, our journey in solidarity with LCWR and Catholic sisters continues. Our group is walking with LCWR into the future, wherever that leads. We hope you will continue to join us.